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Stage

Two dramas, several dysfunctional souls

Compellingly deluded dreams fill 'Blue Leaves,' 'Jerusalem'

NEW YORK — Were Artie and Bunny, the sad, selfish, adulterous couple who dream of showbiz glory in *The House of Blue Leaves*, to exist today, they'd be prime candidates for reality TV.

Of course, when John Guare wrote this darkly farcical play, first staged in 1966, the notion that utterly unexceptional losers

Review

By Elysa Gardner

would not only seek fame and fortune but also feel entitled to it seemed a lot more ludicrous than it does now. And, one could argue, our general obsession with celebrity hadn't yet metastasized into the pervasive sickness it is at the moment.

All of which makes the pairing of this Guare classic and David Cromer, who directs the new Broadway production of *Blue Leaves* (★★★½ out of four), cause for excitement.

Having brought a raw naturalism and fresh topicality to works as diverse as *Our Town* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Cromer seems just the man to revisit Guare's quirky, probing satire. And in this haunting, bleakly funny revival, which opened Monday at the Walter Kerr Theatre, the director and his starry cast deliver.

Ben Stiller funnels the perfect mix of delusion and dejection into Artie, a middle-aged zoo-keeper and aspiring songwriter sharing a squalid apartment with his schizophrenic wife, known to everyone as Bananas and played



By Joan Marcus

House of Blue Leaves: Ben Stiller, with Alison Pill, plays Artie, a songwriter who harbors fantasies of stardom in Hollywood.

by Edie Falco. As the play unfolds, the pope is coming to town, and a breathless Bunny (Jennifer Jason Leigh) pops by early to rouse Artie, recovering from one of his increasingly fruitless gigs at a local bar.

Bunny sees the pope's presence as a sort of spiritual harbinger for her and Artie, who plan to deposit Bananas in a loony bin and run off to California, where Artie's childhood friend, Billy, is

now a successful filmmaker. But their plot is threatened as other, unexpected visitors arrive: a posse of lost nuns, Billy's glamorous but troubled girlfriend and Artie and Bananas' 18-year-old son, a Vietnam-bound soldier with his own twisted scheme to earn the world's attention.

In the end, Bananas emerges as the most pure-hearted and, in her own way, reasonable character, and the superb Falco plays

her with a searing but tender authenticity. Leigh's vain, nattering Bunny is an ideal foil, at once hilarious and disturbing in her ignorant conviction that she and Artie and their fantasies will prevail.

'Jerusalem': Wholly excellent

Johnny "Rooster" Byron, the anti-hero at the center of Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* (★★★½), is

as irresponsible and delusional as Artie, but a better entertainer. Mind you, Rooster has no Hollywood aspirations; he's content to live in hedonistic squalor in a trailer parked in the English countryside, partying with and selling drugs to shiftless teenagers.

The neighbors, not surprisingly, aren't quite so pleased with this arrangement. The London-based play, now at the Music Box



By Simon Annand

Jerusalem: Mark Rylance's "Rooster" Byron is unforgettable.

Theatre, devotes three hours to Johnny's last stand against the conformists demanding his eviction. Butterworth infuses his hero/fool's tale with a sweeping lyricism that nods to Saint George and William Blake (whose poem inspired the titular English hymn).

Mitigating, bawdy humor serves this unlikely process well, as does an impeccable cast directed by Ian Rickson. *Jerusalem* succeeds, above all else, as a vehicle for the talents of Mark Rylance, who invests Johnny with a blazing, barreling intensity and a sort of sordid charisma.

It's a performance that has surely just made the already competitive contest for this year's best-leading-actor Tony Award a little tighter.

People

D'Onofrio back on duty in more relaxed 'Law'

After break, he has renewed confidence, easier schedule

By Nancy Mills
Special for USA TODAY

How difficult was it to persuade Vincent D'Onofrio to return to *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* after leaving the show more than a year ago? Not very.

"All it took was (creator) Dick Wolf asking," D'Onofrio says between setups at the Chelsea Pier Soundstage in Manhattan. He is finishing up Episode 3 of Season 10, which begins Sunday (9 p.m. ET/PT) on USA Network.

After handing off his detective work to Jeff Goldblum, D'Onofrio left the series early in Season 9. He had been hospitalized briefly for nervous exhaustion in the fourth season but soldiered on for another five years.

"I liked doing the show," D'Onofrio says, "but after working on it for so many years, I did need a break. I tried for a long time to get off it, but I didn't want to leave anybody in the lurch."

But finally, there was an opportunity. "Dick eventually figured out a way to segue me out," says the actor, 51. "I have so much respect for Jeff Goldblum that I thought it was going to fly.

But it didn't work out as great as they thought it would."

Now D'Onofrio's Detective Bobby Goren is back to figuring out the way criminals think. "But things have changed here," he explains. "We're not doing as many episodes (just eight) or working as many hours. They found a way to do it so it's more comfortable for Kate (Kathryn Erbe, who plays his partner Alex-

andra Eames) and me."

He adds: "Mainly we're making shows like we did during the early seasons. They're straight-out crime dramas, with Goren being very quirky and doing things that surprise people. We got away from that a little bit in the later years."

Reports suggest that *Criminal Intent* will end after this season, but D'Onofrio says the final decision is yet to be made.

"Some people say it's the last season," he acknowledges. "Some people say it's not.

"If they have to end it, it will end," he says. "We have no control. But if they can figure out a

way to make money off it, it'll stay on the air." And if it continues? "I'd stay with it."

D'Onofrio insists he shares only one quality with his character, Goren. "I have good intuition about people," he says. "I'm pretty good at it in my personal life."

Age brings confidence

D'Onofrio admires Goren's unpredictability. "But he's a little too dark for me at my age." The Brooklyn-born actor adds: "Maybe when I was young, it was OK to be like that. Now it's a bit too much. I've learned to let everything go and leave it at work."

He elaborates. "When you're a young artist, you're struggling to achieve all these things, and you wrap yourself into it and you're in this bubble. When you get older, your confidence is much greater, and your ability is much greater, and you're able to rely on the fact that (your acting ability) is going to be there when you pick it back up. So you can lay it down and go home and not think about it."

He credits his wife, Dutch model Carin van der Donk, with helping him reach this point. "I was kind of a loner, very introverted and pretty socially inept for a long period," he says. "Everything changed when I met my wife. She allowed me to be me, with all my flaws. To know someone truly loved me for who I was ... that relationship has been going on and on, and it's great. When you have that, you can focus more on the artistic things."

They have two sons, Elias, 11, and Luka, 3. D'Onofrio also has a daughter, Leila, 19, with Australian actress Greta Scacchi. "She's making films at the Sydney Film School," he says. "She's interested in directing and writing."

Finding his niche

When D'Onofrio was that age, he had no specific ambition. "I used to put on shows for the neighborhood with my three sisters," he says, recalling his early years in Florida with his divorced mother. "We collected canned food for families in Vietnam. In order to see the show, people would have to bring cans. But I never took performing seriously."

After graduating from high school, D'Onofrio went on a road trip with his best friend. "We drove from Florida to California," he says. "I ended up in Colorado, working construction and labor-

ing jobs."

Eventually he went to New York. "I didn't know what I wanted to do," he says, "but deep down, I knew it would be something artistic. In New York, I learned to respect the arts more. I started to go to (acting) classes, I studied, and I took it seriously."


Theater work led to a starring role in Stanley Kubrick's 1987 film *Full Metal Jacket*. Since then, D'Onofrio has appeared in nearly 70 films, including *Mystic Pizza*, *JFK*, *Men in Black* and the recent crime drama *Kill the Irishman*.

In the upcoming comedic drama *Chlorine*, he and Kyra Sedgwick play "a husband and wife trying to keep up with the Joneses," he says. "It's about the stress

of what's going on these days with the recession and how families are trying to survive."

Don't Go in the Woods, a horror musical that he directed and helped write, is due later this year. He is producing *Mall*, a film version of Eric Bogosian's 2001 same-titled novel. "Eric used to be on the show, and he asked me to read it," D'Onofrio says. "He thought it might be a good idea to make a film of it. So I developed it with some friends, and we're casting it now."

He also wants to direct and star in *Johnny and Me*, about a father/daughter relationship. "It's not so much that I like being in charge. I just like being involved in the whole process."



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UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

In re
MOTORS LIQUIDATION COMPANY, et al.,
f/k/a General Motors Corp., et al.
Debtors.

Chapter 11 Case No.
09-50026 (REG)
(Jointly Administered)

NOTICE OF (I) ENTRY OF ORDER CONFIRMING
DEBTORS' SECOND AMENDED JOINT CHAPTER 11
PLAN AND (II) OCCURRENCE OF EFFECTIVE DATE

TO ALL CREDITORS, EQUITY INTEREST HOLDERS, AND OTHER PARTIES
IN INTEREST:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that an order (the "**Confirmation Order**") (ECF No. 9941) confirming the Debtors' Second Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan, dated March 18, 2011 (ECF No. 9836) (the "**Plan**"), of Motors Liquidation Company and its affiliated debtors (collectively, the "**Debtors**"), was signed by the Honorable Robert E. Gerber, United States Bankruptcy Judge, and entered by the Clerk of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York (the "**Bankruptcy Court**") on March 29, 2011. Capitalized terms used herein but not otherwise defined have the meanings ascribed to such terms in the Plan.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Confirmation Order is available for inspection during regular business hours in the office of the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court, Alexander Hamilton Custom House, One Bowling Green, New York, New York 10004. The Confirmation Order is also available for registered users of the Bankruptcy Court's filing system by accessing the Bankruptcy Court's website (www.nysb.uscourts.gov) and for all parties at www.motorsliquidationdocket.com.

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Dated: New York, New York
April 18, 2011

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767 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10153
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By Marco Grob, USA Network

COVER STORY

What's the best way to get moving?

Engineer: Getting plan right is crucial

By MATT HELMS and JOHN GALLAGHER
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

Fundamental issues dividing city officials from business leaders and others staking millions of private dollars in building new light rail in Detroit must be ironed out soon if work is to begin next year, as Mayor Dave Bing hopes.

Among the questions: ■ Whether the rail line will run down the middle of Woodward — a design transit advocates say would be safer, faster, cheaper and more efficient — or be built on the avenue's curb lanes, as the private backers of the proposed M-1 rail first envisioned to boost tourism and redevelopment.

■ What route the line would travel through downtown. Private backers initially envisioned a line running straight up and down Woodward from Jefferson. But the Detroit Department of Transportation, which will operate the line, prefers a route that bypasses lower Woodward in favor of a loop around lower downtown to connect with the Rosa Parks Transit Center west of Woodward.

■ How to pay for the long-term operation of the project. Ultimately, supporters say, a region-wide rail system, for which the Woodward line is seen as a first step, will require a regional tax.

Operating the line, as is the case with virtually all such lines elsewhere, would require a public subsidy.

And getting a state subsidy for the Detroit light-rail line would, in all likelihood, require putting control of the system into a regional transportation authority. That could spark resistance in Detroit to giving up control of a key piece of city infrastructure. At the same time, suburban voters may balk at approving a tax seen as largely benefitting the city.

Leaders must resolve those issues now, said Martin Schroeder, chief engineer for the American Public Transportation Association.

"If you're going to spend money to put a rail system in, you've got to do your homework. You want to be right the first time," Schroeder said.

In the beginning

It's been a delicate dance from the beginning a few years ago, when some of metro Detroit's wealthiest people pledged tens of millions of dollars to get the M-1 project going after previous city efforts stalled.

Civic and business leaders including Roger Penske, Compuware Chairman and CEO Peter Karmanos Jr. and Quicken Loans founder and Chair-

Light-rail problems to be resolved

1. Down the center or to the side?

Center-running lines tend to be faster, keep a more reliable schedule and stop at fewer stops. Side-running lines tend to be slower, stop more often, but, proponents say, may contribute more to tourism and economic development in areas they serve.



man Dan Gilbert pledged millions for the project, believing a privately funded and operated line could be built more quickly than a city-run project that might get lost in red tape.

But the project ultimately required cooperation between public and private interests, said Megan Owens, executive director of Transportation Riders United, a group that advocates for public transit.

"That's really where M-1 came from," she said, "this desire to get it done faster and to make sure it got done. But you can't really do a transportation project of this magnitude without working with the government. That's the reality."

The federal government has provided \$25 million for the project, and it and the City of Detroit see the Woodward line as the first leg of a regional system.

David Goldberg, spokesman for Transportation for America, an advocacy group, said cities are building or expanding rail as a component of economic growth and redevelopment as more people opt to live and work in cities with reliable transit.

About 28 U.S. cities operate light rail or trolley systems, and at least a dozen more systems are in the works or under study, Schroeder said.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) acknowledged the project's high stakes for Detroit's future but would not discuss the project in detail.

"It will stimulate long-term economic growth by attracting investment to downtown Detroit and the New Center area," FTA Administrator Pe-

2. Getting around downtown

Key decisions are yet to be made about the route the rail line would take downtown — either straight up and down Woodward, or looping around lower downtown to connect with the Rosa Parks Transit Center.



Source: Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study

DAVID PIERCE/Detroit Free Press

Proposed routes and stops



Woodward light rail

What it is: A light-rail system running along Woodward from downtown Detroit to 8 Mile.

Cost: \$450 million to \$500 million, depending on the final route configuration and other details.

Who's paying for it: A combination of city bonds and federal money, and money from non-profits and wealthy individuals. Passenger fares and government subsidies would pay to operate it.

Projected opening date: 2016. Owner: Detroit Department of Transportation, although it may become part of a regional transportation authority.

since passengers get off the trains right at the curb in front of nearby retailers.

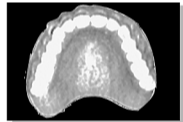
Bing's spokesman declined interviews. He said recently that a well-designed center-running line would not hurt businesses or development along Woodward and could be safe for pedestrians.

Matt Cullen, the chief executive of the M-1 group of private investors, expressed optimism.

"Feel like we're encouraged by our opportunity to better understand what's going on, and we're having a good dialogue with folks," he said Wednesday. "Ultimately, it's Mayor Bing's call as to the design, and assuming that all of our folks are comfortable with the design and budget and operational sustainability of it, then we're in."

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Dated: New York, New York
April 18, 2011

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